Commodity Specification

FROZEN COOKED DICED CHICKEN

JUNE 1998

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I. GENERAL

Frozen cooked diced chicken meat (commodity) produced from ready-to-cook fowl under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Diced Chicken (222140) - Frozen cooked diced chicken meat, produced from ready-to-cook fowl (a class of mature female chickens). Diced chicken will be packed in four 10-pound (4.54 kg) packages to a net weight of 40 pounds (18.14 kg) in each fiberboard shipping container. A purchase unit will consist of 1,000 shipping containers totaling 40,000 pounds (18,144 kg).

II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS

A. Basic Requirements

1. Date Processed. The cooked diced chicken meat (dices) must not be processed prior to the date of the contract and must be prepared from freshly slaughtered ready-to-cook fowl (fowl) (7 C.F.R. § 70.201(f)).

2. Origin of Fowl. The commodity must be produced and processed from fowl which were produced, raised, and processed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. If the contractor processes or handles chicken products produced from fowl originating from sources other than the United States, its territories or possessions, Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the contractor must have an acceptable identification and segregation plan for those products to ensure they are not used in the commodity produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA (grader), and the Contracting Officer or agent thereof upon request. The contractor must ensure that both the contractor and subcontractor(s) maintain records such as invoices, or production and inventory records evidencing product origin, and make such records available for review by the USDA grader or other Government official(s) in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1.

3. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 C.F.R. Part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (inspector). Inspection for contract and specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 C.F.R. Part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 *et seq*.) under the supervision of a USDA grader. The USDA grader will be responsible for certification with the requirements of this Specification for fowl; preparation, processing, and freezing of the dices; packaged frozen dices; packing; labeling and marking; sampling; laboratory results; net weight; and checkloading.

4. Product Temperature. The temperature of the fowl, cooked meat, dices, and individually frozen dices, unless otherwise specified, must be in compliance with 9 C.F.R. § 381.66 and FSIS Directive 7110.3 (Time/Temperature Guidelines For Cooling Heated Products) throughout all operations including transportation between plants.

5. USDA Sampling Option. USDA may select additional commodity for further inspection or may draw samples for additional laboratory analyses.

6. Fowl From Other Plants. Chilled fowl may be transferred or obtained from other processing plants to produce the dices, provided they: (1) have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with this Specification, and (2) comply with the freshly slaughtered, organoleptic, and other applicable requirements of this Specification as evidenced by USDA certification.

a. Class and kind of poultry, date slaughtered, and the USDA-assigned plant number must be shown on each shipping container.

b. The chilled fowl must be maintained at an internal product temperature not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C) when shipped from the origin plant and when received at the destination plant.

B. Requirements of Fowl Meat for Dices

1. Unacceptable Meat. No frozen or previously frozen fowl may be used. Skin, wing meat from the third wing portions, neck meat, giblets, and kidneys from cooked fowl carcasses cannot be used to prepare diced chicken.

2. Organoleptic Requirements. The chilled fowl will be examined on a continuous basis for the following organoleptic requirements: Chilled fowl must be free of rancidity; free of fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, oxidized, metallic, chlorine, and other off or foreign odors; free of foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal); must show no evidence of mishandling or deterioration; and must have a bright color with no evidence of dehydration or freezing and thawing. Any fowl that does not comply with the organoleptic requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

3. Time Requirements. The chilled fowl carcasses must be cooked and the resultant white and dark meat diced, individually frozen, and packaged within 7 calendar days after the day the fowl are slaughtered.

C. Preparation and Processing

1. Cooking. The fowl carcasses must be cooked in accordance with 9 C.F.R. Part 381.

2. Cooling. The cooked fowl carcasses and the cooked white and dark meat must be cooled in accordance with FSIS Directive 7110.3 (Time/Temperature Guidelines For Cooling Heated Products).

3. Preparation of Cooked Meat for Dicing. The dices must be prepared from pulled (deboned) cooked white and dark meat according to one of the following:

a. Cooked white and dark meat in natural proportion as removed from the cooked whole fowl carcass. The contractor must have established control procedures, processing sequence, product flow, and methods for handling the pulled cooked white and dark meat to ensure that: (1) the natural proportion of cooked white and dark meat is maintained, (2) no white meat is removed for other uses, and (3) no dark meat is added from other sources. These procedures and methods must be reviewed and found acceptable by supervisory personnel of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, before they can be used to produce white and dark meat for this Specification.

b. Formulated on a weight basis to contain a minimum of 50 percent cooked white meat and a maximum of 50 percent cooked dark meat.

4. Dicing. The pulled cooked white and dark meat must be mechanically diced to comply with dice size requirements in II.C.11. Dices meeting the size requirements of this Specification are usually referred to as "0.50-inch (1.27-cm) dices" or "nominal 0.50-inch (1.27-cm) by 0.50-inch (1.27-cm) dices."

5. Individually Frozen. The dices of cooked white and dark meat must be individually frozen so the individual dices do not stick together after they are packaged and packed in shipping containers. The individually frozen dices must be handled so the dices are not stuck together when shipped.

6. Packaging and Packing Materials. All packaging and packing materials must: (a) be clean and in new condition, (b) not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity, and (c) be safe (cannot adulterate product or be injurious to health) for use in contact with food products. The safety of food-contact packaging materials will be determined by FSIS according to the criteria and procedures in 9 C.F.R. § 381.144.

a. Plastic-film bags.

(1) Individually frozen diced chicken must be packaged in low-density polyethylene bags with a wall thickness of not less than 3 mil (0.003 inch). Any seams must provide the same protective qualities as the body of the bag. The bag must be of a length that can be readily and securely closed.

(2) Plastic-film bags must have: (a) low-temperature flexibility (not brittle) and durability to resist stress-cracking caused by the temperatures of freezing and frozen storage, and (b) the impact strength, tensile strength, and tear resistance to protect the product quality during conditions of use.

b. Shipping containers.

(1) Requirements. The shipping container must: (a) be a fiberboard container; (b) be of such size to pack the commodity without slack filling or bulging; (c) protect the commodity from contamination and against loss and damage; (d) withstand the variations in humidity and temperature during the conditions of use; and (e) have the bursting and performance characteristics and compression strength (edge crush test) to withstand the stress of handling, shipping, stacking, and storage.

(2) Container bottom. The flaps on the bottom of a fiberboard shipping container must be securely fastened so the bottom remains securely fastened when the top of the container is opened.

(3) Final closure of container. Final closure of the fiberboard shipping containers must be secure and made with commercially acceptable filament-reinforced tape, plastic-film packaging tape, non-metallic strapping, adhesive, or other similar types of materials that can be used for cold temperature storage conditions and that provide for safe handling of the commodity. Steel or wire straps must not be used for the final closure. Staples must not be used for the final closure of any style of shipping containers. Adhesive or staples cannot be used to fasten the top portion of telescope-style containers to the bottom portion. However, staples may be used to manufacture and to assemble the fiberboard shipping containers, provided the staples are fastened into the container and tightly clenched to eliminate sharp edges prior to packing the commodity into the shipping containers.

7. Packaging and Packing.

a. Packaging. Approximately 10 pounds (4.54 kg) of frozen dices must be packaged in a sanitary plastic-film bag. Plastic-film bags must be securely closed with a nonmetallic device in a manner that will protect the frozen dices from contamination, quality deterioration, dehydration, and freezer burn. Metal wire ties, metal clips, paper-coated wire ties, or staples must not be used for sealing plastic-film bags.

b. Packing. Four bags of frozen diced chicken must be packed in each shipping container.

8. Metal Detection.

a. Requirements.

(1) The commodity must be examined by a metal detection device (a) accepted by FSIS; and (b) capable of detecting metallic contaminants including, but not limited to, stainless steel shavings, metal clips, metal fragments from cutting equipment, and pieces of wire.

(2) The package or shipping container of commodity must be placed correctly within the detection field of the device. Procedures used must be appropriate for the dimensions, location, and pattern of the detection field, the "orientation effect" on the sensitivity of the device, the environmental conditions, and the commodity.

b. Operating efficiency and procedures. The operating efficiency of the metal detection device will be determined hourly by a USDA grader using a detection test strip with a 3.0-mm (0.1181-inch) sphere of 440 stainless steel in the center of the detection field pattern. Poultry Programs will provide the detection test strip with the stainless steel sphere of the specified diameter.

(1) The commodity must be examined in the package: (a) prior to packing; or (b) after it is packed into shipping containers.

(2) When the packages are examined individually, the detection test strip will be placed in the center of the detection field pattern.

(3) When the shipping containers are examined, the detection test strip will be placed in the center of a shipping container with the packages of frozen dices.

c. Contaminated product. These guidelines do not relieve the contractor of the responsibility to provide a safe product. Commodity suspected of being contaminated with metal or found to be contaminated with metal will be handled in accordance with FSIS procedures.

d. Other detection procedures. Other procedures for examination of the frozen dices may be approved by the Deputy Administrator of Poultry Programs, in writing.

9. Freezing. The packaged and packed individually frozen dices must be placed into a freezer and the internal product temperature lowered to 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower within 24 hours from the time the individually frozen dices were packaged.

II.C.

10. Organoleptic and Defect Requirements for Dices.

a. Organoleptic requirements. The diced chicken will be sampled on a continuous basis for compliance with the organoleptic requirements shown in Table 1 below. Any diced chicken that does not comply with the organoleptic requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. Defect requirements. A 2-pound (0.91-kg) sample of diced chicken will be drawn and examined for bone and other defects shown in Table 1, in a thawed state. The frequency of sampling and number of samples examined will be those outlined in Poultry Programs' acceptable quality level (AQL) Sample Plan 3 found in the Poultry Graders Handbook. The examination for bone will be made separately from the examination for the other defects.

(1) Regardless of the kind and number of defects (within Table 1) found, any sample with bone or hard bone-like material greater than 0.75 inch (1.91 cm) will be cause for rejection of the product the sample represents.

(2) If the number of bone defects exceed an "accept" level for the respective sample number or result in a rejection, the frequency of sampling for bone defects will be increased to a 2-pound (0.91 kg) sample drawn twice each sampling interval until the cumulative number of bone defects reverts back to an "accept" level.

(3) Dices the sample represents with more defects than the maximum tolerance for the AQL sample plan will be rejected.

Table 1. Organoleptic and Defect Requirements for Dices

Organoleptic Requirements:		The dices must be free of foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal); and odors which are not characteristic of properly cooked and handled fowl meat; for example, rancid, metallic, cardboardy, stale, sour, or scorched.
Defects For Dices:		
	Bones:	The presence of bone or bone-like material greater than 0.75 inch (1.91 cm) (See II.C.10.b.(1)). The presence of bone or bone-like material less than or equal to 0.75 inch (1.91 cm).
	Other:	Cartilage (gristle), tendon or tendinous material, ligament or ligamentous material that is soft-like in texture and extends or is greater than 0.50 inch (1.27 cm); Dark-colored (due to blood) artery or vein greater than 0.30 inch (0.76 cm) in length; Bruises, blood clots, or moderate discolorations which exceed an area equivalent to a circle with a diameter of 0.30 inch (0.76 cm); or An aggregate area of skin greater than 1 square inch (6.45 cm^2).

11. Dice Size Requirements. Packages of individually frozen dices will be sampled and examined for compliance with the dice size requirements on a sample basis. The frequency of sampling and number of samples examined will be in accordance with Poultry Programs' procedures. If any sample does not comply with the dice size requirements, the packages of frozen dices or the product the sample represents will be rejected.

a. Samples. The USDA grader will draw a 2-pound (0.91-kg) frozen sample at random from a 10-pound (4.54-kg) package selected each sampling interval for the sieve test.

b. Sieve test. The grader will use either an 8-inch (20.32-cm) or 12-inch (30.48-cm) diameter sieve to determine dice size requirements. For the 8-inch (20.32-cm) sieve, the grader will split the 2-pound (0.91-kg) sample in half and test each separately. For the 12-inch (30.48-cm) sieve, the grader will test the entire 2-pound (0.91-kg) sample. After the product is placed in the sieve, the USDA grader will lightly shake the sieve in a back-and-forth motion for approximately 30 seconds before recording the results.

c. Requirements. A sample must meet the following requirements:

(1) Not more than 5 percent of the weight of the sample can be retained on a U.S. standard 0.75 inch (1.90 cm) screen (sieve).

(2) Not more than 5 percent of the weight of the sample can pass through a U.S. standard 0.19 inch (0.48 cm) screen (sieve).

d. Rejected samples. The contractor may request that the rejected packages of frozen dices be re-examined on the basis of a stationary lot. The number of shipping containers which will be examined are outlined in 7 C.F.R. § 70.80. One sample will be examined from each shipping container sampled. The individual results of each sample examined with each size of screen will be averaged. When the average for both sizes of screens complies with the dice size requirement, the stationary lot is acceptable for use under this Specification.

D. Lots, Sublots, and Sampling

1. Definition of a Lot.

a. A lot is the amount of packaged commodity produced during a processing shift.

b. The packaged frozen commodity will be: (1) sampled for laboratory analyses and analyzed for compliance with the microbiological requirements; and (2) accepted or rejected on a lot basis.

2. Definition of a Sublot.

a. A lot may be separated into sublots for the purpose of sampling and analyzing for compliance with the microbiological requirements. If this option is used, the packaged frozen commodity must be sublotted on the basis of consecutively produced: (1) shipping containers, or (2) pallets. The sublots of containers or pallets must be consecutively identified at the time of packaging and packing.

b. Commodity sampled and analyzed on the basis of sublots will be accepted or rejected on a sublot basis.

3. Sampling. The USDA grader will draw packages of individually frozen dices at random from each lot or sublot.

a. A lot. The number of packaged commodity to be drawn from each lot (processing shift) will be as follows:

Number of Shipping Containers in Lot	Minimum Number of Packages
0 - 150	3
151 - 300	6
301 - 600	9
601 - 1,200	12
over 1,200	18

b. A sublot. A minimum of three packages will be drawn from each sublot. The total number of packages drawn from all the sublots in a lot must be equal to or greater than those specified for the applicable size of lot described in paragraph a. above.

4. Samples for Laboratory Analyses.

a. The USDA grader, or an authorized plant employee under the supervision of the USDA grader, wearing single-use plastic gloves and mask, will aseptically draw three 0.50-pound (0.23-kg) samples from each package sampled using a sterile single-use spoon. All equipment and supplies used for sampling must be provided by the contractor. Each sample will be placed in a separate sterile moisture-proof sample bag. The three samples from each package sampled will be used as follows:

(1) One for microbiological analyses at a USDA laboratory.

(2) One for the contractor.

(3) One for a reserve sample.

b. The frozen dices in the samples will be maintained in a frozen state.

c. The samples for the contractor will be given to the contractor after all the samples for the lot or sublots have been drawn and prepared.

d. The reserve samples will be identified as such and will be retained in a freezer under the control of the USDA grader. These samples will be used for laboratory analyses when the original samples are lost or arrive at the USDA laboratory in an unacceptable condition, or when requested by the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, Washington, D.C. If the reserve samples are not used, they will be returned to the contractor.

E. Laboratory Analyses

1. Microbiological Requirements.

a. Requirements for a lot or sublot. A lot or sublot of packaged frozen commodity must comply with the following microbiological requirements when sampled and analyzed according to II.D.3., II.D.4., and II.E.3. A lot or sublot of packaged commodity failing to meet these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

(1) Standard plate count will not exceed 50,000 per gram.

(2) Coliform count will not exceed 100 per gram.

(3) Escherichia coli (E. coli) results will be less than 10 microorganisms per gram.

(4) Coagulase-positive Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus) results will be less than 10 microorganisms per gram.

(5) Salmonella results will be negative.

b. Salmonella-positive frozen dices. If any sample from a lot or sublot is found Salmonella-positive, the USDA grader will notify the FSIS inspector. The disposition of the frozen dices in the lot or sublot the Salmonella-positive sample represents will be in accordance with FSIS directives and procedures.

2. USDA Laboratories. The samples for laboratory analyses may be submitted to any one of the USDA laboratories listed below, except when AMS determines that conditions or workload of a specific laboratory do not permit the prompt handling of samples. All costs incurred for shipping the samples and the laboratory analyses will be paid by the contractor.

USDA, AMS, Science and Technology Programs
Eastern Laboratory
2311-B Aberdeen Boulevard
Gastonia, North Carolina 28054
Telephone (704) 867-3873

USDA, AMS, Science and Technology Programs
Midwestern Laboratory
3570 North Avondale Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60618
Telephone (312) 353-6525

Laboratory Services Division
Minnesota State Department of Agriculture
90 West Plato Boulevard
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107
Telephone (612) 296-3273

Laboratory Services Division
Oregon Department of Agriculture
200 Hawthorn Street, South East, Suite A140
Salem, Oregon 97310-0110
Telephone (503) 986-4565

3. Laboratory Analyses.

a. The methods for microbiological analyses will be the following:

(1) Salmonella. Any approved AOAC International official status method found in Chapter 17, Volume One, Sixteenth Edition (1995) of "Official Methods of Analysis," published by the AOAC International, that specifies: (a) "Salmonella All Foods," Raw, Highly Contaminated Foods or poultry, and tests for all Salmonella (both motile and non-motile); or (b) "Salmonella" Chapter 5, Seventh Edition (1992) of "Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA)" "Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM)."

(2) Standard plate count (SPC), coliform count, E. coli, and Coagulase-Positive S. aureus. Methods for SPC, coliform count, and E. coli in: (a) Chapter 17, Subchapter 2, 17.2.01, "Chilled, Frozen, Precooked, or Prepared Foods," method number 966.23, and Subchapter 5, 17.5.01, and 17.5.02, "Staphylococcus aureus in Foods," method numbers 987.09 and 975.55 of Volume One, Sixteenth Edition (1995) of "Official Methods of Analysis," published by the AOAC International, Subsection 6.3.H. in the section "Alternative Methods for SPC" of Chapter 6, Sixteenth Edition (1992) of "Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products;" and (b) Sections II, III, IV, and VI of Science and

Technology Division's "Laboratory Methods for Egg Products," dated Revised August 1993, or any revised method superseding the sections listed.

b. For original analyses of samples from a lot or a sublot, the USDA laboratory will aseptically combine consecutively numbered samples from the lot or sublot into groups of three, remove an equal amount from each sample in the group, and combine them into a composite sample for analysis. Each composite sample will be ground and blended into a homogeneous mixture and then analyzed for standard plate count, coliform count, E. coli, coagulase-positive S. aureus, and Salmonella. The results for each composite for a lot or each sublot in a lot will be reported on the USDA certificate. The highest result for each type of analysis will determine whether the lot or sublot complies with the applicable microbiological requirements.

c. For an appeal of original analyses, the USDA laboratory will analyze and then report the results as outlined in II.E.5.d.

4. Timely Receipt of Laboratory Results. The contractor must present the packaged frozen dices to USDA so the commodity may be sampled, the samples sent to the USDA laboratory, and the laboratory analyses performed in time for the laboratory results to be available for the contractor to meet the shipment or delivery requirements of the contract. If laboratory results are received by the contractor later than 7 calendar days, excluding Sundays and Federal Holidays, from the receipt of the samples by the USDA laboratory, the number of days' delay in excess of 7 calendar days, excluding Sundays and Federal Holidays, will be added to the permissible shipment or delivery period before liquidated damages for late shipment or delivery will be assessed.

5. Appeal of Laboratory Analyses. Except for Salmonella-positive frozen dices, an appeal of original laboratory analyses for a lot or sublot may be authorized by a USDA grader. Before an appeal can be considered, the request for an appeal must be filed with the USDA grader within 48 hours (excluding weekends and Federal Holidays) from the time the results of analyses being appealed are received by the contractor. Any number of laboratory results representing a lot or sublot may be appealed, i.e., standard plate count, coliform count, E. coli, S. aureus, but still count as only one appeal. Only one appeal per lot or sublot is permitted.

a. A USDA grader will log the number of appeals for each processor. The USDA grader may grant up to ten appeals of the first forty sets of original laboratory results representing a lot or sublot. Thereafter, no more than three appeals will be granted based on an evaluation of the previous thirty lot or sublot results reported, as described in Poultry Programs' Instructions.

b. For the appeal, the lot or sublot will be sampled and samples prepared by the USDA grader by one of the following procedures:

(1) When the reserve samples are available, the USDA grader will randomly draw from the lot or sublot the same number of samples as drawn during original sampling and identify the samples as appeal samples. These samples plus the reserve samples previously prepared during the original sampling of the lot or sublot will be submitted for microbiological analyses.

(2) When the reserve samples are not available, the USDA grader will randomly draw twice the number of samples as drawn during the original sampling and identify the samples as appeal samples.

c. The samples for the appeal will be submitted to the USDA laboratory where the original analyses were performed.

d. The USDA laboratory will analyze the samples and report the results of an appeal as follows:

(1) When both the reserve and appeal samples are submitted by the USDA grader for a lot or sublot, the laboratory will make composite samples as described in II.E.3.b. from the reserve and appeal samples separately, analyze each composite for the analysis being appealed, and report the results of each composite for the reserve and appeal samples separately on the USDA certificate.

(2) When only the appeal samples are submitted for a lot or sublot, the USDA laboratory will combine the samples into twice the number of composites described in II.E.3.b. and analyze each of the composite samples for the analysis being appealed. The results of each composite will be reported on the USDA certificate and identified as the results for appeal samples.

e. The laboratory results of the samples for the appeal will supersede those of the original analysis for which the appeal is being requested and will be final.

III. LABELING

A. Shipping Containers

1. Labeling Provisions. The labeling and marking of the shipping containers must be in accordance with this Specification. Labeling is subject to the provisions of 9 C.F.R. § 381.132(c)(3)(iv). The name and address of the contractor or processor must not appear on the packaging materials or the shipping containers.

2. Printing Requirements. Printed, stamped, and stenciled labeling and marking information on shipping containers must be water-fast, nonsmearing, of a contrasting color, clear, and readable.

3. Labeling Format. Any deviations from the labeling requirements in this Specification must be approved by the Contracting Officer, in writing, prior to start of production.

4. Recycle Symbol and Statement. The contractor shall place somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container the recycle symbol shown in EXHIBIT 1. The statement "PLEASE RECYCLE" is to be placed under the symbol. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed in permanent ink.

5. Universal Product Bar Code.

a. A Universal Product Code (UPC), symbol and code, called Interleaved 2 of 5 (I 2/5), must appear on each shipping container. The complete code, including the check digit, must be printed in machine-readable and human-readable form. The start and stop indicators must be included in the bar codes. Printing, readability, and scanability of the bar code must be in accordance with UPC guidelines published by Uniform Code Council, Inc., 8163 Old Yankee Road, Suite J, Dayton, Ohio 45458.

b. The contractor will use the code furnished by USDA. USDA has acquired a unique manufacturer's identification number for the commodity purchase programs and will use a unique item code number for cooked diced chicken purchased under this Specification. The contractors need not join Uniform Code Council, Inc.

c. The 14-digit UPC code for diced chicken is: 1 07 15001 01517 1

d. The UPC code must be placed in the lower right-hand corner of both side panels of the shipping container.

6. Labeling and Marking Information.

a. Requirements. Labeling and marking information must be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on shipping containers. This information, in essentially the same layout, is provided in EXHIBIT 2, "Label Information For Shipping Containers Of Frozen Cooked Diced Chicken Meat."

b. “END” and “SIDE” designations. For the purpose of labeling and marking, the "end" and "side" panels may relate to the shortest and longest dimensions of the shipping container at the discretion of the contractor/processor. However, the panels must alternate between "end" panel and "side" panel designation with the two side panels and two end panels being located on opposite panels of the shipping container.

7. TOP PANEL - Labeling and Marking. The following information must appear on the top panel of each shipping container:

a. Type and name. The commodity type and name must be printed on the top panel of each shipping container.

b. Storing instructions. The following storing instructions must be printed on the top panel of the shipping container:

PERISHABLE--KEEP FROZEN
KEEP AT ZERO DEGREE F (-17.8 °C) OR BELOW

c. Key points for handling commodity. Handling information is required on each shipping container of commodity. The "KEY POINTS FOR HANDLING" must be legibly printed on the top panel of each shipping container. This information, in essentially the same layout, is set out in EXHIBIT 2.

d. Nutritional labeling. A nutritional label, indicating the nutrient content of the commodity, is required on the top panel of each shipping container. This nutritional facts information or "nutrition facts panel" must be in compliance with the FSIS nutritional labeling requirements found in 9 C.F.R. § 381.400(b) through § 381.499.

(1) The contractor/processor may select one of the following methods of providing the nutrition facts panel:

(a) Preprinted on the top panel of each shipping container; or

(b) Printed on a pressure-sensitive label and applied to the top panel of each shipping container. The pressure-sensitive label must not cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

(2) NOTE: The nutrition facts information and panel must be pre-approved by FSIS prior to shipment of the commodity. The method of providing and location of this information for each shipping container (preprinted or pressure-sensitive label) must be indicated on the FSIS label application. The pre-approved nutrition information must be provided to the USDA inspection personnel at the plant where the commodity is to be packed for shipment.

8. ONE END Panel - Labeling and Marking. The following information must appear on one end of the shipping container.

a. Type and name. The commodity type and name must be printed on the "one end" designated panel of each shipping container. The words "COOKED DICED CHICKEN" must be printed in letters at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) high.

COOKED DICED CHICKEN

b. Contract number and pack date. The following information may be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on the shipping container, or on a separate pressure-sensitive label:

(1) Last five digits of the contract number as it appears in the acceptance wire.

(2) Date packed (month, day, and year).

c. Inspection mark and plant number. The USDA inspection mark and USDA-assigned plant number must be printed on the "one end" designated panel of each shipping container.

d. Net Weight. The following net weight statement must be printed on the "one end" designated panel of each shipping container.

4 Bags Net Combined Weight 40 LBS. (18.14 KG)

e. Storing instructions. The following storing instructions must be printed on the “one end” designated panel of each shipping container:

KEEP FROZEN

9. ONE SIDE Panel - Labeling and Marking. The following information must be printed **on the side panel immediately to the right of the "one end" panel** containing the information designated in III.A.8.:

a. Type, name, and legend. The commodity type and name, and the legend must be printed on each shipping container.

INDIVIDUALLY FROZEN COOKED DICED CHICKEN MEAT
Distributed By USDA in cooperation with State and local
or tribal governments for food assistance programs.
Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.

b. USDA symbol. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height, and must be printed on each shipping container.

c. UPC code. The UPC code (see III.A.5.) must be printed on in the lower right-hand corner of the "one side" designated panel of each shipping container.

10. THE OTHER END Panel - Labeling and Marking. For each shipping container, the following information must appear on the end opposite the panel designated "one end."

a. Type and name. The commodity type and name (see III.A.8.a.) must be printed on "the other end" designated panel of each shipping container.

b. USDA symbol. The USDA symbol (see III.A.9.b.) must be printed on the end opposite the panel designated "one end."

11. THE OTHER SIDE Panel - Labeling and Marking. For each shipping container, the following information must appear on the side opposite the panel designated "one side."

a. The type, name, and legend. The type, name, and the legend (see III.A.9.a.) must be printed on the side opposite the panel designated "one side."

b. UPC code. The UPC code (see III.A.5.) must be printed on in the lower right-hand corner of the side opposite the panel designated "one side" of each container.

12. Inventory Control Label. The processor may use a pressure-sensitive label to place any additional information (including bar codes) for processor inventory control purposes. This label may be applied somewhere on the surface of the shipping container. The label must not: (a) contain the contractor or processor name or address, or (b) cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

B. Use of Previously Printed Material

Carryover inventories of existing supplies of printed packing materials from the Commodity Specification for Frozen Cooked Diced Chicken dated August 1995 may be used.

Shipping containers or labels with incorrect: (1) contract number, (2) plant number, (3) net weight, or (4) date packed must be corrected before they are used. The incorrect information must be blocked out and the correct information legibly printed, stamped, or stenciled in permanent ink.

C. F.a.s. Vessel Deliveries

F.a.s. vessel deliveries that are not source loaded in a seavan are required to show the final destination's overseas address as provided in the Notice to Deliver. The address must be clearly printed on at least two sides of each pallet.

IV. FINAL EXAMINATION OF PACKAGED AND PACKED COMMODITY

A. Material and Net Weight Compliance

1. Verification of Materials and Defects.

a. Verification of packaging and packing materials. The contractor must verify compliance with packaging, packing, and marking material requirements by furnishing the USDA grader the following certification on company stationery signed by a person authorized to do so by the contractor:

"(I) (We) certify that the packaging, packing, and marking materials used for any commodity presented for acceptance under the terms of the Commodity Specification for Frozen Cooked Diced Chicken dated June 1998 comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name _____

Title _____"

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

b. Packaging defects. Packages in a delivery unit will be examined for defects that affect protection, expose product, or permit dehydration or freezer burn, or quality deterioration during storage, such as tears, holes, or improperly sealed or closed packages.

c. Packing defects. Shipping containers in a delivery unit will be examined for condition, labeling, and marking defects according to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers.

d. Tolerance for defects. If samples of packaged commodity or the shipping containers in a delivery unit have more defects than the maximum tolerance for the applicable Poultry Programs' AQL sample plan, the delivery unit will be rejected.

2. Net Weight.

a. A purchase unit or delivery unit will total 40,000 pounds (18,144 kg) net, or multiples thereof.

b. Each delivery unit, except as provided in IV.A.2.f. below, will be examined for compliance with the net weight requirements at time of checkloading.

c. The tare weight of all packaging materials will be determined by weighing a representative sample of all packaging components such as plastic-film bags, clips, and fiberboard containers.

d. Twelve (12) shipping containers will be randomly selected from a delivery unit to determine net weight. The total net weight of the 12 shipping containers must be equal to or greater than 480 pounds (217.72 kg).

(1) If the total net weight of the sample is less than 480 pounds (217.72 kg) but greater than or equal to 475.20 pounds (215.55 kg), the delivery unit will be accepted at the following discount:

(Average Test Net Weight Per Container)

Less Than	But Not Less Than	Contract Price Discount
40.0 pounds (18.14 kg)	39.6 pounds (17.96 kg)	1.0%
39.6 pounds (17.96 kg)	--	Unacceptable

Payments will be made on the actual quantity delivered. All price adjustments will be based on a delivery unit.

(2) If the total net weight is less than 475.20 pounds (215.55 kg), the delivery unit will be rejected.

e. A rejected delivery unit may be reworked and reoffered one time only. However, if an individual shipping container in the sample of the reworked delivery unit has a net weight of less than 39.60 pounds (17.96 kg), the delivery unit will be rejected.

f. As an alternative to test weighing at time of checkloading, the contractor may request on-line verification of net weights. Upon receiving the request, a Federal-State supervisor, Grading Branch, Poultry Programs will determine that the facilities and procedures are in accordance with the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

At the time of loading, shipping containers will be randomly drawn from each delivery unit and examined to determine the condition (including separation) and the internal product temperature of the individually frozen dices in the packages.

1. Condition of Dices.

a. A defect for condition of dices is a sample (package) in which dices are stuck together in clumps and cannot be easily and readily separated without removing from the bag.

b. Sample size will be one 10-pound (4.54 kg) package drawn from 18 shipping containers randomly selected from the delivery unit. If four or more samples (of the 18 samples examined at the time of loading) are found to contain the defects described, the delivery unit will be rejected.

c. Frozen cooked commodity showing any evidence of defrosting, refreezing, or freezer deterioration will be rejected for use under this Specification.

2. Internal Product Temperature.

a. Requirements. The internal product temperature of the packaged frozen dices must be 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower at time of loading. Delivery units with internal product temperatures exceeding 2 °F (-16.7 °C) and up to 5 °F (-15 °C) will be tentatively rejected. Tentatively rejected delivery units may be returned to the freezer and the temperature reduced to 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower and reoffered one time only. Delivery units exceeding 5 °F (-15 °C) or delivery units that have been tentatively rejected and exceed 2 °F (-16.7 °C) when reoffered will be rejected for use under this Specification. Sample size for verifying internal product temperature will be according to the current Poultry Programs' sampling level as determined by the freezing history of the contractor.

b. Optional temperature verification. As an option to verifying internal product temperature at time of loading, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing product temperature sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State supervisor will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the contractor's current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a USDA representative, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. Part 70, 9 C.F.R. Part 381, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A USDA representative may select samples for laboratory analyses or inspect the commodity at any point in transit and after delivery to point of destination. Inspection records must be complete and made available to USDA, as requested, to assure contract compliance.

2. Procedures. The inspection and checkloading required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1 must be performed by a USDA grader. Procedures to be followed and a schedule of fees for these services may be obtained by contacting the nearest Grading Branch field office or the Chief of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 3938-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independecne Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271. The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA grader. The contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the USDA grader that the designated lot or sublot to be shipped meets contract specifications.

V. UNITIZATION

Each delivery unit of commodity must be unitized (palletized and stretchwrapped) and comply ith the following:

V.

A. Pallets

Pallets must be good quality, wood, 48 inches x 40 inches, nonreversible, flush stringer, and partial fourway entry. Each pallet of shipping containers must be stretchwrapped with plastic film in a manner that will secure each container and layer of containers on the pallet. Palletized product must be loaded in a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

B. Pallet Exchange

Contractors may arrange for pallet exchange with consignees; however, USDA is in no way responsible for such arrangements.

VI. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with this Specification, the applicable Announcement and Invitation, and Articles 56, 57, and 64 of USDA-1, as amended by the applicable Announcement. In addition, the contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

A. Contract Compliance Stamp

Each shipping container must be identified with a USDA Contract Compliance stamp with the applicable certificate number. A USDA grader, or other authorized personnel under the supervision of the USDA grader, will stamp one end of each shipping container prior to shipment. If there is inadequate space available on either end of the shipping container, the stamp may be applied to a side of the container.

B. Grading Certificate

A copy of the original USDA Poultry Products Grading Certificate issued at time of checkloading must accompany each shipment.

1. Railcar or Piggyback. If shipment is by rail or piggyback, the certificate must be placed in the railcar or trailer for easy access to the USDA grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

2. Trucks. If shipment is by truck, the driver must, upon delivery, give the certificate to the USDA grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

C. Loading and Sealing of Vehicles

Loading must be in accordance with good commercial practices and the sealing must be done at origin under the supervision of a USDA grader.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The contractors are responsible for arranging railcar deliveries of more than one delivery unit so that each delivery unit contained in the same railcar can be completely separated and sealed.

2. Truck or Piggyback. Truck or piggyback shipments must be sealed at origin. A delivery unit shipped by truck or piggyback which includes split deliveries to two destinations will not require separation by sealing each drop.

D. Delivery Notification

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 56 of USDA-1, as amended by the applicable Announcement, the contractor must follow the instructions in the Notice to Deliver issued by the Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO) concerning delivery notification. Such notification and information of impending delivery are vital in proper execution of delivery. The contractor must notify the State distributing agency and the consignee of shipment per instructions in the Notice to Deliver. For rail or piggyback shipments, notification shall be made on the day of shipment. For truck shipments, notification of the estimated arrival time should be made as far in advance of delivery as possible. In addition, for truck or piggyback shipments, the contractor must request and keep scheduled appointment(s). Unloading appointments for truck or piggyback shipments must be requested from the consignee contact party(ies) at least 24 hours in advance of delivery.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the contractor must notify the appropriate resident USDA grader and furnish applicable information.

2. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in store provided the destination in the Notice to Deliver and the place the contractor has the commodity in storage are the same. Inspection and certification by a USDA grader are also required for transfers in store.

3. Early Delivery. The contractor may deliver early upon approval of the KCCO. Approval may be obtained by telephoning (816) 926-6068. Approval is contingent on the recipient's concurrence to accept early delivery and upon a USDA grader being available to perform necessary checkloading and final acceptance duties.

E. Split Deliveries

The contractor is responsible to deliver the quantity stated on each Notice to Deliver to each destination. Contractors must provide to the USDA Grader, at time of shipment, the number of boxes and pounds for each destination.

At the option of the contractor, a purchase unit with two Notices to Deliver (split deliveries) for two different destinations may be delivered on two separate trucks provided each truck ships the total quantity stated on the Notice to Deliver. Any additional costs will accrue to the contractor's account.

VII. DESTINATION EXAMINATION

The cost of a destination examination, before or after delivery, by a USDA grader on accepted product will be for the account of USDA. Costs for destination examinations of rejected delivery units will be for the account of the contractor. The USDA origin grader will make arrangements for destination examination prior to delivery.

A. Commodity Requirements

Before acceptance by consignee, the commodity may be examined by a USDA grader on a spot-check basis for temperature, condition, identity, and when applicable, count. The commodity may be examined for conformance to contract provisions at any time required by the Contracting Officer.

B. Temperature

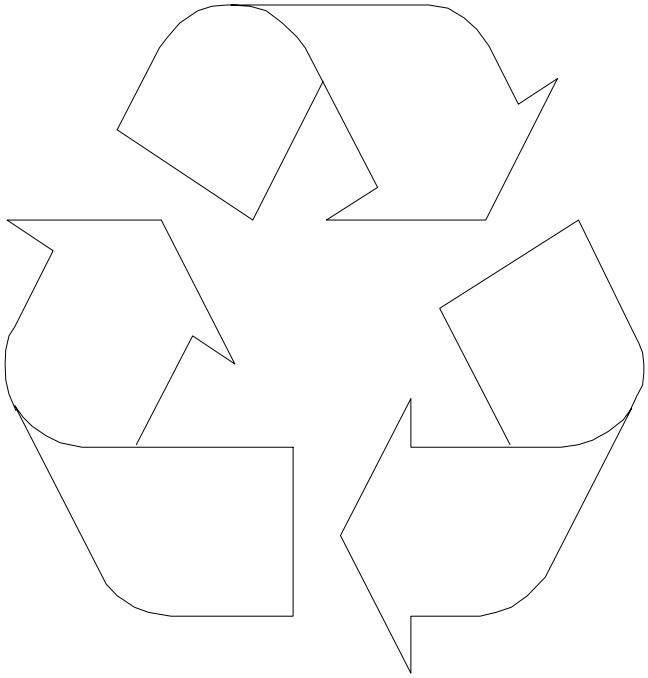
The commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal product temperature not to exceed 10 °F (-12.2 °C) with no individual temperature exceeding 15 °F (-9.4 °C). Commodity not meeting these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

_____

D. Michael Holbrook
Deputy Administrator, Poultry Programs

Attachment

EXHIBIT 1
"Please Recycle" Symbol and Statement



PLEASE RECYCLE

EXHIBIT 2
Label Information for Shipping Containers of Frozen Cooked Diced Chicken Meat

Marking Information: Shipping containers shall be marked substantially as shown below. Markings must be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on containers, water-fast, nonsmearing, of a contrasting color, clear, and readable. The words "COOKED DICED CHICKEN," on each end, must be in letters at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) high. The USDA symbol is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height. The UPC 14-digit I 2/5 code (1 07 15001 01517 1), symbol and code, must be shown in the lower right-hand corner of both side panels. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container.

COOKED DICED CHICKEN

USDA FOOD

Individually Frozen
COOKED DICED CHICKEN MEAT

PRODUCT: The chicken is cooked, ready-to-eat without reheating or further cooking. No skin or neck meat is used. The breast and leg meat is pulled from the bone and cut into irregular shapes by blades set to make ½-inch (1.27 cm) square cuts, leaving pieces with random natural depth and shape. The pieces are individually quick-frozen and packed into poly bags, four 10-pound (4.54 kg) bags in each shipping container.

KEY POINTS FOR HANDLING DICED CHICKEN

Handle Properly To Avoid Spoilage Or Possible Food Poisoning.

STORING: When kept at 0°F (-17.8 °C) or below, the chicken can be poured from the bag as needed and will keep its high quality for up to 6 months. Partially filled bags should be kept tightly closed.

THAWING: If thawing is desired, keep frozen cooked diced chicken in the poly bag or pour into a clean covered container. Thaw in the refrigerator at 36 to 45 °F (2.2 to 7.2 °C) for 1 day. Keep thawed chicken in the refrigerator until needed. Use within 2 days after thawing. Do not refreeze thawed chicken.

YIELD: One 10 pound (4.54 kg) bag provides approximately 80 2-ounce (56.7 g) servings of cooked chicken. One 40 pound (18.14 kg) shipping container provides approximately 320 2-ounce (56.7 g) servings of cooked chicken.

Nutrition Facts Panel
May Be Placed Here.

PERISHABLE--KEEP FROZEN

KEEP AT ZERO DEGREE F (-17.8 °C)

OR BELOW

INDIVIDUALLY FROZEN
COOKED DICED CHICKEN MEAT
Distributed by USDA in cooperation with State and local or tribal governments for food assistance programs.
Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.

UPC Code

INDIVIDUALLY FROZEN
COOKED DICED CHICKEN MEAT
Distributed by USDA in cooperation with State and local or tribal governments for food assistance programs.
Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.

UPC Code

USDA FOOD

COOKED DICED CHICKEN

KEEP FROZEN

INSPECTED FOR WHOLESOMENESS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE P-00

4 Bags Net Combined Weight
40 LBS. (18.14 KG)

CONTRACT NO. _____
DATE PACKED Month, Day, Year